

LATEST BOOKS SEEN THROUGH REVIEWS AND COMMENT

CRITICAL REVIEWS
OF THE SEASON'S
LATEST BOOKSCharles Marriott Takes Up the Affinity Twaddle
—Grant Richard's Book AmiableTwo More Plays Novelized—Collections of Stories
by Irvin Cobb and Wallace IrwinBooks on America and the Antipodes Biography,
Art and Many Other Subjects

It is too bad that Charles Marriott should take up the affinity twaddle in "The Wondrous Wife" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Indianapolis), for he writes in an easy, unaffected manner English which it is a pleasure to read and the woman that he tells about is sensible and attractive. She is married to an egotistical author whom she leaves, not so much because he is false to his marriage vows as because he is dishonest to himself. The author shows up his selfishness and failings with much brightness and gentleness. The wife meets another man who loves her and is loved in return; they spend much time in discussing the situation amicably and without regard to social prejudices. They reach the point where they are ready to elope, but something holds them back. The author chooses to designate it as the woman's sense of duty and makes it turn on the husband's developing an incurable mania in reality. It looks more as if Mr. Marriott, having ventured as close to the edge as he dared, prefers to step back when he sees the commonplace vulgarity of the catastrophe his reasoning leads to. Why waste so much ingenuity and brightness on such a hopelessly stale and unprofitable theme?

A moral fairy tale is related entertainingly by Edwin Hateman Morris in "The Millionaire" (The Penn Publishing Company, Philadelphia). A rich young man is dared by a young woman to try to earn his own living and starts out to do so. A somewhat needless incident makes him begin under greater disadvantages than he had counted upon. He becomes interested in a rural community on the shores of Chesapeake Bay, where he is enabled to demonstrate to his own satisfaction and that of his friends that he has business capacity and physical power. It is surprising to discover that the girl who started him off is mercenary, but another fully as attractive is provided as his reward. The author writes so pleasantly that he makes his melodramatic absurdities very readable; we can only hope that he will take some pains with his plots in future.

Two novels by Mary Findlater, that come together from E. P. Dutton and Company, are fully up to the standard of earlier Scottish tales by this author and her sister, in "A Narrow Way" humor predominates, the heroine is a charming, level-headed girl who makes the best of everything, even in the grim Edinburgh neighborhood in which she lives. The reader may not share the author's admiration for the man who rescues her from her surroundings, who seems to be a professional philanthropist. The tragic occurrences toward the end would reflect on Scotland as a safe place for defenceless young women, if they were not brought about so evidently from the author's feeling it her duty to stir her readers' emotions. The plot of the other story, "Betty Musgrave," hangs together better, so that the reader will be able to follow the love part more intelligently. It deals with the misfortune and perils of a young woman whose mother is addicted to drink, and though painful in parts is not so gloomy as might be imagined. Both stories are enlivened by lifelike minor characters and both betray a childlike craving for the horrible.

A genuine, old-fashioned Beadle Indian story is told by Randall Parrish in "The Maid of the Forest" (A. C. McClurg and Company, Chicago). The story is attached to St. Clair's defeat; it is immaterial save that it enables the author to put his Indians and rascally Britishers in their classic setting amid the rivers of Ohio. They are the Indians of romance, Wyandots, Ojibways, Miami, Shawnee, and the hero's companion is a Kentucky marksman.

Modern elements in the charming half-breed girl who guides the hero. There is plenty of desperate fighting and astounding woodcraft, enjoyable stuff that we are glad to see used again. An eccentric old woman, a small negro boy and a mongrel cur, all victims of the callous brutality of a stolid village community, manage to get the better of their oppressors in "John e Bartlett's" by Jean Edgerton Hovey (L. C. Page and Company, Boston), and to convert a self-sufficient minister. The savage cruelty of the village boys is sketched with much spirit, the people stand out vividly and the story shows power. The youthful exaggeration is no great fault and it is conceivable that an obstinate, wrong-headed parson may see his own faults. The sudden reform of the village, however, is too great a strain on the reader's credulity and is poor art.

Another purposeless succession of scenes in Paris and London, described pleasantly enough, make up Grant Richard's "Valentine" (Houghton Mifflin Company). The amiable hero, being kept in practical dependence by his father, is much in the position of a "remittance" man, though he lives at home. He is a harmless sort of a fellow with no taste for sport apparently, though he has the experience of betting on races and of borrowing money from a usurer, but comes to no great harm. His Parisian experiences are equally uneventful. He wins the affection of a nice American girl without much trouble and discovers a professional blunder of his father's, which causes him some tribulation till he finds out that it has been set right without his knowledge. The one noticeable thing about him is that whenever the author starts to get him into trouble he changes his mind at once and sets him right at once; this is probably pleasant enough for the hero, but will puzzle the reader who is expecting a story.

It is hard to make out whether it is futuristic farce that Ford Madox Hueffer is writing in "Ring for Nancy" (The Bobbs-Merrill Company) or whether he is indulging merely in his own boisterous fun. The farce opens with the comical departure of a train from a London station, all the persons engaged being ludicrously incoherent and chattering volubly at great length. Next they appear, with others, in a country house,

where after much conversation the gallant but weak minded hero finds himself at midnight in his bedroom with four discordant young women and a pet dog. After a satirical court room scene and another laughable bedroom episode the hero is permitted to marry the disguised heroine, whom every one had recognized from the beginning. The book certainly testifies to Mr. Hueffer's high spirits.

Two more plays have been novelized. Eugene Brieux's "Les Avariés" after exciting G. Bernard Shaw's admiration, has attracted that of T. S. Arthur. He tells the story in "Damaged Goods" (The John C. Winston Company, Philadelphia), which has the decided merit of being greatly abridged. Another play of less notoriety, "Years of Discretion" appears in story form with Frederic and Fanny Locke Hutton as its authors (Dodd, Mead and Company). Something of the incoherence of a nightmare will be found in "The Drifting of the Cavashaws" by H. Norman Grisewood (E. P. Dutton and Company, New York). Various exciting incidents follow on one another and are unexpected because no cause is assigned either at the time or later. The obtuseness of the bystanders to what is going on is only surpassed by the lack of intelligence on the part of the heroine. The author's chief concern seems to be to keep his hero busy.

A story of Georges Ohnet dealing with the Chouans and Chouan's con-

spiracy has been "adapted" by Helen Meyer, possibly from a dramatization, under the title "The Eagle's Talons" and illustrated by A. de Parys (G. P. Putnam's Sons).

THE OLD IROQUOIS
(Now a Vaudeville House in Chicago)

By AGNES LEE.

By a new name they call the house today
The balconies of blood are gilded over
Tardy Decoration writes upon the curtain
And lights a beacon lamp at every door.

Where are we? Who hath told us all these things
Dreaming within us till we know and see?
This is the Iroquois, the house of death.
Here echoed one united agony.

Muted horn suddenly in char and ember,
Here, in this very place. The walls remember.

And bright the revel rose and loud the laughter
But what is yonder awing, "altering host?"
Shall this gay rout give birth alone hereafter?
No! Hark, the sobbing of a little ghost!

House extreme to darken thought of man,
Let some stern Azrael above thy portal
Attend the sacrifice! Through all thine aisles
Let stanza ring, born sounding and immortal!

Ah, not the staid sleep, the eastward's!
Ah, not the long deep laughter that forgets!

—From Harper's Weekly

knowledge than the boy Howells could have. It is a delightful trip he provides for those who have visited Spain as well as for those who have not. He tells before them. The book is illustrated with drawings by Walter Hale and some photographs.

A lively and entertaining description of a land of which we ought to know more than we do has been written by Paul Gooding in "Picturesque New Zealand" (Houghton Mifflin Company), which is illustrated with splendid photographs, some of them filling two pages. The author saw the sights of the North and the South Islands pretty thoroughly. We infer that he did not set foot on Stewart Island, but he did some climbing in the Southern Alps. He looked up a number of things in New Zealand besides the natural wonders such as the Maoris and some of the experiments in government, but he merely records his experiences and tells what he saw. His observations may not be more valuable than those of the average tourist, but he is an intelligent one, he tells us many astonishing things that we ought to know and he is always entertaining. The book would read eagerly even if it had no pictures; those the author has obtained are wonderfully fine.

A delightful and readable account of adventures in the wilderness and big game shooting of all kinds will be found in Capt. C. H. Stigand's "Hunting the Elephant in Africa" (Macmillan), to which Col. Theodore Roosevelt contributed an introduction. The author uses the first person in telling what happened to him, but modestly, as he might on the witness stand, the difference in the emphasis on the pronoun I in his text and that of his introducer should be noticed by students of English. Capt. Stigand is a naturalist as well as a hunter, but he is not squeamish about killing. He hunts for the rhinoceros, the hippopotamus, the lion and the buffalo as well as the elephant and not to mention the lesser game that is needed for food. He notes many interesting facts about the native and their habits, about animals and their ways, devoting a whole chapter to insects, and about many matters that may help later hunters. He ranked among the greater part of Central Africa, though mainly within British spheres of influence. The book is illustrated with many photographs and is written in an unpretentious and unassuming style.

The fact that little is known generally about the history of Iceland is the excuse for Nevin O. Winter's devoting more than half of "Poland of To-day and Yesterday" (L. C. Page and Company, Boston) to a sketch of Polish history, which might be more complete and critical, but which serves its purpose satisfactorily. The rest of the book describes the noble places in what was once Poland—Posen and the German share, Lemberg and the Austrian portion, Warsaw and Russian Poland, Cracow and so forth, all illustrated with fine photographs. There are chapters on the Polish Jew and on the Poles in America. Some suggestion for a method of pronouncing the many proper names the author brings in would improve the book.

In "Athens, the Violet Crowned" (Little, Brown and Company) Miss Lillian Whiting pours her customary flood of

Views of Many Lands.

No pleasant travelling companion than William Dean Howells can be wished for in the realm of letters, particularly when he is enthusiastic about the land he visits. It is a belated journey he describes in "Familiar Spanish Travels" (Harpers), as he explains in

his autobiographical introduction, and the reader probably suffers with him for the delay of sixty years by being held to the beaten path. It was from San Sebastian and Burgos that Mr. Howells entered Spain and looking close to the railroad made his way gradually down by Valladolid, Madrid, the Escorial, Toledo and Cordova to Seville and Granada and Ronda and Tarifa. He had his share of travellers' experiences and does not keep them to himself, he looked at the sights too with greater

laudation over Athens, the Greece of the past and the present, the authors and the artists she has consulted and many persons she has met or heard of. Some may find a certain amusement in having Greek art, Greek thought and Greek literature translated or commented on in the language of the society reporter and some may be irritated by it. The author's admiration, however, is genuine enough and well directed, some bits of her own observation may be discovered occasionally and she has secured many extremely good pictures for illustration. She has discovered also a period between the time when Lord Morley was plain John and his elevation to the peerage, when he was designated as Sir John Morley, the biographer of Gladstone. She fairly revels in this Sir John of her creation, as she has every right to. The pleasant things she says about the living persons whom she has occasion to mention will be gratifying to them.

It is the society reporter let loose with instructions to be as sprightly as she can that we meet in Mrs. Alcega, Tweddle's "America As I Saw It" (Macmillan). She apparently wishes to obtain a success of scandal by saying sassy or disagreeable things in a kitchenish way. As a text she begins and ends with the sage remark: "Hypersensitiveness is the American sin," which, as it is in capitals, we suppose is meant for an epigram. The writer was writing for a London fashion paper; she had visited the United States several times before; she could bend her whole mind to being sprightly. A good many things she criticises fairly enough; many contrasts with English ways that she objects to may be regarded as matters in which tastes may differ; others are clearly expressions of the writer's own prejudices. All the criticisms are intentionally superficial. The book is illustrated in a serious manner. It has some etchings by Joseph Pennell, some caricatures made in New York and many more made in London with the idea that they represented Americans. The most amusing portions of the book are the lists of persons that the author met and thanks for kindness shown to her.

Art, Mainly Subsidiary.

Pretty nearly all that is to be shown, if not said, of a special form of decorative art will be found, we fancy, in the large quarto volume of illustrations, entitled "Louis Seize Furniture" by Seymour de Ricci (William Heinemann, 61, P. Putnam's Sons), a book that will be of the utmost service to collectors. There are 256 pages of pictures, some full page, all on a large enough scale to show every detail of the objects represented. These range from views of celebrated and historic rooms through representations of articles of furniture, large and small, to enlargements of details in decoration and to small ornaments of the period. No article that the collector is in search of is omitted, and of many objects the examples furnished are more than abundant. The author's brief introduction is a model of thoroughness and conciseness, but he does not neglect to give a useful bibliography of important books. It makes a very beautiful volume.

The author's name gives authority to Josiah C. Wedgwood's "Staffordshire Pottery and Its History" (McBride, Nast and Company, New York), for if any one could be competent to write on the subject it should be the grandson of the great potter. Mr. Wedgwood does not trust to memory or family tradition; he has examined a great deal of interesting documentary evidence, from which he often quotes, and has written with much conciseness and directness an extremely interesting account of a great industry and of the men who engaged in it. This involves much local history of the "Five Towns" that Arnold Bennett has made familiar. The author pays more attention to the industrial than to the art side of pottery, though that is not neglected, for this is a collection of facts and not an aesthetic treatise. It is illustrated with portraits, maps and other pictures.

A volume of practical suggestions intended to help plain people in selecting furniture within their means with some regard to good taste has been compiled by George Leland Hunter in "Home Furnishing" from articles written by him for various periodicals. His hints are sensible, as a rule, and are generally such as can be heeded easily. (John Lane Company).

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A number of uncommonly interesting and valuable books of travel and description, fully illustrated, is at hand. A beautiful region that seems destined to attract pleasure lovers in the near future is described with great sympathy for the people as well as nature by Margaret W. Morley in "The Carolina Mountains" (Houghton Mifflin Company). The author does not neglect the places that tourists and invalids visit, but she ventures into far less trodden paths and examines the border mountains from end to end.

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